

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 PM-04 SP-02 INR-07 /035 W

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R 091555Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8072

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 1611

STADIS////////////////////////////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR FT

SUBJECT: U.S. PRESENCE IN TFAI

SUMMARY EMBASSY BELIEVES PROBLEMS AND DISADVANTAGES OF OPENING  
CONSULAR POST IN DJIBOUTI BEFORE INDEPENDENCE OF THE TERRITORY  
OUTWEIGHT ADVANTAGES. END SUMMARY.

1. LAST SUMMER EMBASSY INITIATED EXCHANGE OF LETTERS WITH  
ASST SECY DAVIS ON SUBJECT OF PLANNING FOR U.S. PRESENCE IN  
TFAI. EMBASSY THEN INCLINED TO FAVOR ESTABLISHING A  
PRESENCE, BUT AF BUREAU THOUGHT IT PREMATURE. EMBASSY  
NOW AGREES WITH BUREAU.
2. GOOD POLITICAL REPORTING FROM A CONSULAR POST IN DJIBOUTI  
WOULD MATERIALLY AUGMENT USG'S CAPACITY TO GET GOOD INFORMATION  
ABOUT, AND TO UNDERSTAND, POLITICAL, SECURITY, AND ECONOMIC  
SITUATION IN TFAI. AGAINST THIS FACT MUST BE SET THE RISKS  
AND DISADVANTAGES IN AN AMERICAN PRESENCE IN THE VOLATILE  
SITUATION THERE, AND ALSO THE FACT THAT ABSENT PRECISELY  
FORMULATED U.S. POLICIES, WE NEED NOT INCUR THOSE RISKS.
3. EMBOFFS VISITING TFAI HAVE HAD EASY ACCESS TO WIDE  
VARIETY OF POLITICAL FIGURES, ALL OF WHOM SEEM EAGER TO BE IN  
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CONTACT WITH USG. HOWEVER, EVEN BEFORE KIDNAPPING OF BUS-LOAD

OF FRENCH SCHOOL CHILDREN IN EARLY FEBRUARY, EMBASSY HAD ALREADY CONCLUDED THAT FORESEEABLE SCENARIO OF RISKING TENSIONS WILL MAKE IT INCREASINGLY COMPLICATED EVEN FOR VISITING RPT VISITING EMBOFFS TO HAVE CONTACTS THAT ARE NOT SUBJECT TO MISINTERPRETATION. RESIDENT U.S. OFFICIALS WOULD LIKELY FIND THEMSELVES TARGETS OF UNFOUNDED ALLEGATIONS AND DISINFORMATION, AND IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO REMAIN UNINVOLVED IN INCREASINGLY TENSE (AND DANGEROUS) SITUATION. USOFFS WOULD BE SUBJECTED TO QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS THAT WOULD MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO SUSTAIN A ONE-WAY ROLE OF SOLICITING INFORMATION BUT REMAINING UNRESPONSIVE.

4. A COUNTERARGUMENT CAN BE MADE THAT SUCH RISKS ARE WORTH RUNNING IN ORDER TO HAVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT PARTICIPANTS AS WELL AS FRENCH OFFICIALS. THIS ARGUMENT LACKS FORCE, HOWEVER, BECAUSE IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT USG DOES NOT SEE A CLEAR AMERICAN ROLE AT THIS STAGE IN THE SITUATION, AND CONSEQUENTLY DOES NOT HAVE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES THAT MIGHT BE FURTHERED IN CONTACTS BY U.S. OFFICIALS. IF THE USG FORMULATES AND DEVELOPS POLICY THAT REQUIRES CONTACTS WITH TFAI LEADERS FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION, THEN EMBASSY WOULD WISH TO REASSESS ITS RECOMMENDATION. IF VIABLE INDEPENDENCE IS ACHIEVED, DEPT SHOULD THEN CONSIDER ESTABLISHING A SMALL EMBASSY.  
HUMMEL

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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** PFOR, FT, US  
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